

REMARKS

Claims 6-8, 11-14, 17-20, 23-25 and 28 are pending in this application, of which claims 6, 12, 18 and 23 have been amended. Claims 15-16, 21-22 and 26-27 have been canceled. No new claims have been added.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,746,606 to **Sobhani**.

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The present invention; as recited in the amended claim 6, provides a needle-like member that constitutes a conductive contact which electrically connects a first object to a second object.

The needle-like member comprises a columnar member having a first end and a second end, a through hole extending entirely through the columnar member from the first end to the second end to form openings in said first end and in said second end, a contact member integrally formed on the first end of the columnar member and configured to electrically contact with the first object, and a spring member that surrounds an outer surface of the columnar member and applies an elastic force on an other needle-like member present in the through hole, as recited in the amended claim 6.

The through hole has hole portions with different inner diameters, as recited in amended claim 6.

One hole portion of the needle-like member has an inner diameter and a length such that an electrical contact resistance can be maintained constant between the one hole portion and the other needle-like member, and inner diameters of other hole portions are larger than the inner diameter of the one hole portion, as recited in the amended claim 6.

Sobhani fails to teach or suggest the features mentioned above, in particular, that a spring member that surrounds an outer surface of the columnar member and applies an elastic force on an other needle-like member present in the through hole, as recited in the amended claim 6.

Thus, the 35 U.S.C. §102(e) rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 6-8 and 11-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Vinther et al. in view of Kagami (both previously applied).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Both Vinther et al. and Kagami fail to teach or suggest the features recited in claim 6, as amended, as discussed above. In particular, these references fail to teach or suggest that one hole portion has such an inner diameter and a length that an electrical contact resistance can be maintained constant between the one hole portion and the other needle-like member, and inner diameters of other hole portions are larger than the inner diameter of the one hole portion, as recited in amended claim 6.

Thus, the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 6-8, 11-14, 17-20, 23-25 and 28, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the fees filed, asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by this firm) to our Deposit Account No. 04-1105.

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CUSTOMER NO.: 21874

Respectfully submitted,

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